Smuggling of Timber

4232. SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI NAVINCHANDRA MEHTA : Will the Miniser of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the punitive steps proposed to prevent smuggling of timber along the Myanmar border;

(b) the number of smuggling cases detected during the last six months and awaiting adjudication;

(c) whether the Government propose for absolute confiscation of goods to curb the smuggling activities; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) Field formations are alert to detect and prevent smuggling of timber into India from Myanmar. Seized timber is confiscated under the provision of customs Act, 1962 and redemption fine as well as personel penalty is imposed in adjudication proceedings in respect of such cases.

(b) 12 cases have been detected during last six months which are waiting adjudication.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does to arise in view of (c) above.

Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd.

4233. SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the BHEL is properly utilising the land given by the Government of Madhya Pradesh for setting up of its plant;

(b) if so, the purpose for which the land is being utilising;

(c) whether the vacant land is likely to be utilised for extension of the plant; and

(d) if so, the detail thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b). The land given by the Madhya Pradesh Government has been properly utilised by by BHEL for setting up the Factory. Administrative Office buildings, Residential Quarters, Hospital and other infrastructural facilities.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) It is proposed to utilise the vacant land for the future growth and diversification phase of the Unit, the dwelling units for employees and required infrastructural facilities.

[Translation]

Dacoity in Punjab Nationa Bank, Delhi

4234. KUMARI UMA BHARATI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any dacoity took place recently in the Punjab National Bank located at South Extension, New Delhi;

(b) if so, the estimated value of items taken away in the dacoity;

(c) whether the Bank Authorities proposes to pay any compensation to the locker owners;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (e). Punjab National Bank (PNB) have reported that a case of burglary took place at its branch in Sourth Extension, New Delhi after close of the banking hours on 30.11.1996 and before the bank was opened after weekly holiday on 2.12.1996. The burglars had broken open 13 lockers and emptied them of all their valuables. The police have registered an FIR relating to this case.

Taking into account the facts of the case and the provisions of the lease agreement entered into by the Bank with the locker holders, the Bank has been advised to deal with the claims lodged by the Concerned locker holders. RBI has also been requested by the Government to examine the matter and to advise the bank suitably in accordance with law and equity.

[English]

Committee on Public Investment

4235. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Cochin Refineries Ltd., Kerala, has sought stage I clearances by the Committee on Public Investment Board;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto, and

(c) the time by which the proposal is likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). Committee of P.I.B. has not yet considered it pending the receipt of appraisals of the concerned Ministries and Planning Commission and hence no final decision regarding clearance has been taken.

[Translation]

Sales Tax on Marital Items

4236. PROF. OMPAL SINGH 'NIDAR' : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to abolish or to reduce the Sales Tax on marital items such as bangles, bichua, bindi, sindur etc. in Uttar Pradesh; and